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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7984
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9090
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0863
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 6929
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 5982
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 0997
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 3754
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 1681
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9550
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 9836
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 2405
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 7801
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3561
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 0846
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 3185
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 016266

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/19/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES BALOCHISTAN SECURITY ISSUES

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter W. Bodde, DSCG 05-01,
January 2005, Edition 1, Reason: 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: During the Ambassador,s August 10-11 visit to Balochistan, Governor Owais Ahmed Ghani said that Pakistan,s anti-Taliban efforts is currently focused on expelling undocumented Afghans, but that there is no long-term plan for dealing with the Afghan population. Ghani believes that the security situation in the province has turned a corner for the better. The Balochistan Frontier Corps (FC) Commander requested increased US funding to increase the FC,s intelligence capabilities and to equip a planned FC hospital, as his forces have become the frontline troops for stopping cross-border raids by anti-Coalition militias (ACMs) and fighting provincial insurgents. End summary.

The Taliban

12. (C) Meeting in Quetta on August 10, the Ambassador commended Governor Ghani for the government,s renewed effort to dislodge Taliban members hiding in Balochistan. Ghani described a campaign focused against illegal Afghan refugees. The government is picking up all Afghans without proper documentation and expelling those who are "harmless" and holding those who are "suspicious." Of 240-some Afghans arrested in mid July, four fell into the "suspicious" category. Ghani noted that many Pakistanis view the Taliban differently from al-Qaeda, because the Taliban are Afghans (i.e., not foreigners imported into the region). He admitted that the GOP has no long-term policy in place for dealing with the Afghans in Pakistan. Ghani considered the continued presence of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees a burden on Pakistan, but said that Pakistan cannot repatriate all the refugees at once, given the destabilizing effect this could have on the fragile Afghan government. Noting that he is a Pashtun "like Karzai," Ghani asked the Ambassador to tell Karzai "not to bad mouth" the GOP.

13. (C) Ghani described the current security situation in the province as improving. Referring to operations in eastern Balochistan against insurgent Baloch tribal leader Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Ghani said "we are in a mopping up period...we are over the hump." The Governor said that a meeting with local residents in central Balochistan encapsulated the changed situation: a local man told him that, over the years, the tribal leaders had done nothing for the Baloch people and that, until recently, neither had the GOP. If the government provided electricity and other tangible aspects of development, the man continued, the local population would take care of the nawabs. Ghani observed that "things are now happening on the ground...(the people) can see things happening." He believes that the majority of tribal people understand that Nawabs Bugti and Marri suppressed development and modernization by force; he credited the government's support for education as strengthening the middle class and diluting the influence of the tribal and feudal leaders. It is now up to the government to ensure that young, educated Balochis had jobs and are able to participate in the province's development, he said.

14. (C) In a separate meeting, Balochistan Frontier Corps (FC) commander General Shujaat Dar offered the Ambassador a contrasting view of the province's security situation. Dar said that the FC--a paramilitary force of locally-raised troops--seized more narcotics than any other security force in the province and that it suffered more casualties than any other security force, including the Army. Dar laid out the difficulties FC forces faced in an operation at the town of Baramshah, which straddles the border on the road between Balochistan and Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand Province, Afghanistan. His forces reconnoitered the village, taking photos of a drug factory on the Afghan side of the border, before coming under fire. In the ensuing firefight, his

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troops escaped, losing five men while killing twelve. He now has 500 troops encircling the village, blocking supplies in or out, until those who killed his troops are handed over. The villagers, however, can elude the FC cordon through "a backdoor" to Afghanistan.

15. (C) Dar said that FC troops supporting CFC-A Operation Mountain Thrust had established 36 new checkpoints or posts and are now stopping "nomadic movement" across the frontier. The FC would not allow nomads crossing the border to become a source of illegal activity or to sneak Taliban in or out of Pakistan.

16. (C) The Baramshah operation shows "my boys aren't afraid of anything," Dar said, but they need better equipment, better training, and better intelligence to do their job. He complained that Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) receives more USG financial support than the FC. Dar specifically asked for USG funding to increase the FC's intelligence capabilities, including UAV support, as waiting for the intelligence to go up the chain of command "takes a helluva lot of time." Dar also asked whether USG funds for the FC could be disbursed at a faster pace and whether the U.S. could fund the planned increase in FC forces. Dar expects that, by December 2006, the growth in FC troops will outpace available vehicles and other equipment. Dar questioned whether the GOP would follow through on funding commitments for FC expansion because of the budgetary constraints facing Islamabad in the next four to five years. The Ambassador replied that the U.S. commitment to the FC expansion is unchanged.

17. (C) Dar concluded by requesting USG support to equip a new FC hospital, explaining that the Army currently charges the FC--including combat casualties--the same rate it charges civilians treated at the hospital. This angered Dar because, "We have the highest casualty rates." While praising his relationship with the commander of the Army's 12th Corps, Dar expressed frustration that the FC must rely on the

facilities and capabilities of other security forces, as he wants the FC to be "dynamite in its own right."

Pakistani Coast Guard--Gwadar

18. (C) During his August 11 visit to Gwadar, the Ambassador met LTC Mohammed Tariq, commanding officer of the Pakistani Coast Guards 3 Battalion. Tariq told the Ambassador that USG assistance to the Coast Guards has increased the force, mobility and reaction time, improved surveillance capabilities, as well as communications and command and control. ODRP has provided Gamma Ray scanners, marine radar, binoculars, vehicles, as well as funding for 16 observation towers in the 240 kilometers of coastline the Gwadar battalion oversaw. ODRP had also funded the renovation of four fast patrol boats and will provide six rugged hulled inflatable boats, ten more observation towers, and a mobile command and control center. NAS provided the Coast Guards with vehicles, and communication and surveillance equipment. Tariq reviewed the number of illegal immigrants his battalion had intercepted, as well as the amount of hashish and liquor confiscated, revealing marked increases in both, which he attributed to improved capabilities. (Note: The Pakistani Coast Guards area of responsibility is the coastline--not offshore--and reaches as far as 120 kilometers inland.)
BODDE